

E. Blesiot

The Talon

Rocky Mountain Arsenal and Two Ponds National Wildlife Refuges Volunteer Newsletter
February/March 2006

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Bald Eagle Roost Counts

Bald eagle roosts are counted several times a week by the Refuge's biologists during the winter months.

February Counts

02/06/06	25
02/08/06	19
02/11/06	22

This Just In!

The bald eagles are incubating and hatching is expected as early as 3/21!

Volunteer Hours

Without all of the hard work and dedication of the Service's most valuable resources, our volunteers, we wouldn't be able to accomplish all that we do. Last fiscal year volunteers contributed 10,987 hours, making last year a very remarkable one. Thank you for making a difference! Reporting our accomplishments to the Washington office is how our successes are measured. The manner in which we report our accomplishments has recently been modified to accurately reflect work that was performed. Change is inevitable and a constant here at the Refuge. Those who have been with the volunteer program for many years are well aware of this phenomenon. Those of you who use the touch screen to sign in; you are well aware of the changes taking place.

The Washington office now requires that field stations report hours in the following categories:

Wildlife and Habitat

Biological Technician

Habitat Technician

Refuge Maintenance

Refuge Maintenance Technician

Environmental Education

Environmental Education Program Leader

Cultural Resources

Cultural Resources Technician

Wildlife-dependent Recreation

Visitor Services: Tour Guides, Trail Rovers, Visitor Center

Bookstore

Training

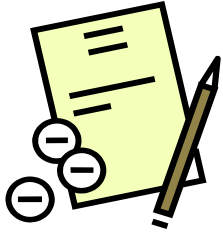
Other Activities

Condensing many of the activities we previously reported eliminates a cumbersome list, making our reporting time more efficient. Should you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact Jeannine at 303-289-0471.

Due to network maintenance and other uncontrollable issues the touch screen may be down. If it is not operational please notify a staff person.



Calendar of Events



Volunteer Work Session

Thursday, April 20, 2006

7:00 pm Visitor Center

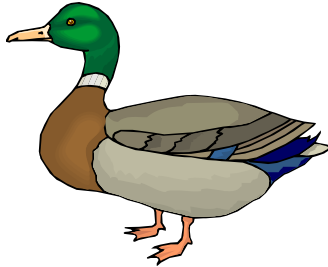
Please volunteers only to attend due to Basin F slow start

Waterfowl ID Workshop

Saturday, February 25, 2006

9:00 am—12:00 pm

Join this exciting workshop lead by Refuge Manager Dean Rundle. Meet at the Visitor Center for shuttle to the Assembly Room .



The Refuge will be closed to weekday and weekend visitors

April-May!!

Volunteer Appreciation Day

Saturday, June 24, 2006

2:00 pm Visitor Center

Bridges – A Success Story

After more than two years of negotiating with bridge contractors and canal companies we have finally bridged the gap finding common ground. The Farmers High Line Canal Company has signed an agreement to allow construction of a foot bridge over the High Line Canal permitting access between the east and west portions of Two Ponds National Wildlife Refuge. The Manager for Farmers Reservoir and Irrigation Company, which manages the Croke Canal, has verbally agreed to sign an agreement to allow construction of a foot bridge over that canal as well. We also have found a contractor who will do the construction within our budget.

In order to make this project work the Service will be providing some support service for the bridge construction and we hope to get some volunteer help to assist with installation of the bridge decking boards. At this time we do not have a firm time line for the bridge, but expect that construction will be completed during the spring.

I would like to thank the Two Ponds Preservation Foundation for raising the matching money required to secure the grant enabling this project and for their support throughout this process. Thanks goes out to the City of Arvada for a generous contribution to this project and thanks to the canal companies for their cooperation as well.

Vic Elam

Refuge Manager

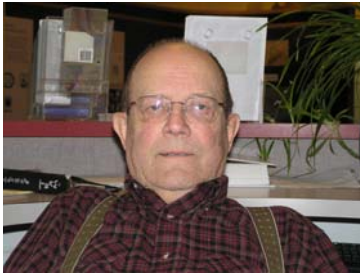
Attention!!

Public Scoping Meeting

The Service would like to extend a special invitation to you to attend a public scoping meeting scheduled for **February 25, 2006 at 4:00 pm** in the Administrative Records Facility (Building 129), east of Building 111. The purpose of this meeting is to collect suggestions and comments from the public regarding the future management of the Refuge fishery and recreation fee fishing program. In addition, the sampling results from the aquatic survey conducted in 2005 will be provided. We encourage you to attend this important meeting and welcome your input and suggestions. **For more information, call Judson Spicer at 303-289-0572.**



Get to Know Someone



Originally from southwest Wisconsin, Richard Prew and his family moved to Colorado in 1981. Richard and his wife Norma have been married for 48 years; they have five daughters, one son, and nine grandchildren. Richard worked for public utilities for 30 years. Richard enjoys woodworking and volunteering at the Refuge. He became interested in the volunteer program at the Colorado RV, Sports, Boat, and Travel Show in February 2005 and came on board as a Visitor Center Assistant in April 2005. If you have not met Richard, he works on Thursday and Friday, stop by and introduce yourself.

Volunteer Appreciation Event

Volunteers are crucial to the successful operations of the Refuge and without YOU; we would not be where we are today. Every year the Service hosts the Annual Volunteer Appreciation Event to highlight and reward you for all your dedication.



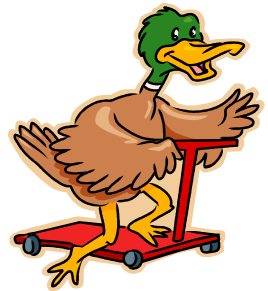
Historically this event takes place in April, during National Volunteer Week. This year we are going to try something a little different. Join us for the 17th annual celebration of your accomplishments on Saturday, June 24 at 2 pm at the Visitor Center for a delicious meal, Refuge Manager Tour, fishing, and great company!

Junior Duck Stamp Contest

The Junior Duck Stamp Program is in full flight this year and all kids K-12 are welcome to participate in this *free* art and science opportunity designed to teach wetlands habitat and waterfowl conservation.

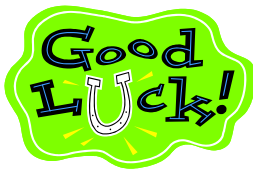
The Junior Duck Stamp contest runs fall-spring. Students at the state level are judged in four groups according to grade level: Group I: K-3, Group II: 4-6, Group III: 7-9, and Group IV 10-12. Three first, second, and third place entries are selected for each group. A "Best of Show" is also selected by the judges from the 12 first-place winners regardless of their age group. Each state's "Best of Show" is then submitted to the Duck Stamp Office in Washington D.C. and entered into the national contest. All entries must be postmarked by March 15, 2006.

For more details on how kids, teachers, and schools in your local area can participate in this fun educational program contact Colorado State Coordinator Seth Beres @ 303-289-0867 or visit www.fws.gov/duckstamps/junior/junior.htm. Grab your paints, pencils, markers, paper and get quacking!



Farewell!!

After three years as an Outdoor Recreation Planner, Ivan Vicente is moving to sunny Florida. Ivan accepted a job as a Park Ranger at Chassahowitzka NWR, north of Tampa, Florida. February 17 will be his last day at the Refuge.



After 2 1/2 years at the Refuge Wildlife Biologist Noelle Ronan will also be leaving for a new job in Colton, New York near the Adirondack Mountains. She will be working on black fly control for the city of Colton near the Adirondack State Park. Noelle's last day will be March 17.

Fishing Fever

Please save the day! Fishing Fever 2006 is just around the corner. This popular event will be held on June 10, hours and activities are yet to be determined. If you have suggestions for an activity you would like to see featured, or would like to help out, please give Susan a call at 303-289-0366.



The new RMA stickers are now available. These stickers are **only** for those volunteers who enter through the West and North Gates or those who volunteer in B111 or in B120. Please get with Jeannine before 4/15 or for more information please contact Jeannine @ 303-289-0471.

Prescribed Burns

The prescribed burning of prairie land has been in use for as long as the prairie has been here. Burning on the prairie used to be started naturally by lightning strikes and then by Native Americans, who realized how much prescribed burning improved the land. Later homesteaders continued using prescribed burning to clear debris out of irrigation canals, improve pastures, and remove unwanted plant matter from crop fields.

The Refuge now conducts prescribed burns to stimulate the native prairie, help with weed control and to burn up accumulated fuels that could cause larger and more uncontrollable fires in the future. With the growth of residential areas around the Refuge even more time and effort is being put into planning these burns so that the areas outside the Refuge are affected as little as possible. This year the Refuge will be burning up to 1,086 acres during the burn season which is usually conducted during March and April, but also may be conducted during September and November.



Two Ponds Tuesday

At the time this article was written we have seen two Two Ponds Tuesdays. The first Tuesday, Two Ponds National Wildlife Refuge and some of the Rocky Mountain Arsenal National Wildlife Refuge staff joined forces to clear some trees (mostly exotic species such as Russian Olive) that were invading prairie areas targeted for restoration in 2007. Most of the trees were chipped and scattered, some branches were piled for later removal.



The second Tuesday, the same individuals were present for more tree removal, this time around the Friends Pond dam and along the Marshall Pond retaining wall, to facilitate wall repair or replacement later this year. We also accomplished some general clean-up and replaced the main entrance sign. In addition, we were able to get out on the ice on Friends Pond, punch holes and get some depth readings to calculate pond volume.

The accomplishments resulting from Two Ponds Tuesdays are already evident at the Refuge and are limited only by the amount of manpower available on that one day a month. I hope to get some volunteer interest to augment the Refuge staff and increase the productivity, because there is no shortage of needs.

Anyone interested in volunteering their time and skills will be welcome to join us. All staff and volunteers meet at the main Refuge entrance on 80th Avenue at 8:00 am.

Vic Elam
Refuge Manager



Visitor Center Assistants, Bookstore Clerks, and Trail Rover Volunteers are needed!! Contact Jeannine at 303-289-0471 for more information!!

Passing of a Friend



World War II Veteran, lawyer, and judge Harvey Cochran passed away December 29, 2005 at the age of 90. Services were held January 2, 2006 at St. John's Lutheran Church in Denver. Harvey was one of the "original" volunteers. He became a Refuge volunteer when the program first began, in 1990. Harvey performed a plethora of tasks helping make the Refuge a better place. Harvey had a great spirit and we will miss him dearly.

Visit our website
<http://fws.gov.rockymountainarsenal/>

Tour Guide Training

The long-awaited new script is about ready. Watch for the upcoming May training date. More details available soon!

